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NORSE DISCOVERIES IN AMERICA.

BY

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Discredited at the start, the Norse claim of the discovery of the American continent five centuries before Columbus has gradually gained a respectful hearing from American scholars, and to-day, nine hundred years after the interesting event, stands finally admitted in the opinion of those best qualified to judge the question.

In preparing a commemorative essay on the subject it is therefore, fortunately, not necessary to enter into an elaborate defence of the correctness of the main features of the Icelandic sagas as handed down to us in several well-authenticated manuscripts from the 14th century, corroborated as they are by a number of striking references, dating back to the middle of the 11th, to the testimony of the cautious and entirely disinterested Adam of Bremen.

The question now before the historian and antiquarian is not whether the hardy Norse sailors of the 11th century reached the American continent after having established themselves in its ante-chamber—Greenland. The question is how far south they proceeded, and whether or not they established a permanent settlement in any of the newly-discovered regions. The first of these points can only be settled in one of two ways. Either there must be discovered unmistakable archæological traces of the Norsemen of that remote period or the geographical hints and descriptions given in the sagas may be followed and a locality fixed upon, chiefly by a process of exclusion.

The former of these methods has repeatedly been employed, its climax having been reached in the well-meaning but exceedingly doubtful conjectures of Prof. E. N. Horsford. All attempts along this line thus far have, however, been fruitless of results, and the verdict of Prof. John Fiske, in his interesting monograph, "The Discovery of America," to the effect that "not a single vestige of

the Northmen's presence here at all worthy of credence has ever been found," can probably safely be subscribed to by friends as well as by enemies of the Norse claim.

It is different with the indications given in the sagas, although nothing like unanimity has as yet been established with regard to the conclusions drawn from them. The chief difficulty rests in the fact that these sagas give two somewhat conflicting versions of the story, one of which must be more genuine than the other. Most writers, like Anderson, De Costa, and Horsford, have failed to acknowledge this, although the last had access to two valuable treatises on the subject, viz.: Prof. G. Storm's "*Studies on the Vinland Voyages*" and Mr. A. M. Reeves' photographic reproduction of the manuscripts, with a careful English translation.

Of the two versions, the more recent—the one found in the so-called *Flatoe-book*, a manuscript compiled from older sources about 1387—was at first more generally known, and for a long time accepted as the best authority. It has, however, gradually been losing ground as a consequence of the severe criticism brought to bear upon it by Prof. Storm, and later by Mr. Reeves. According to this version, of which an excellent translation is given in Mr. Reeves' book, the real discoverer of Wineland was one Bjarni Herjulfson, who, about 987, accidentally drifted upon some unknown regions far to the southwest of Iceland, whence he was trying to cross over to Greenland. Some fifteen years later Leif, a son of Erik the Red, the earliest settler in Greenland, went to explore the unknown regions. He struck land to the south in three different places, calling them in succession Helluland (Flat-stone-land), Markland (Forestland), and Vinland (Wineland), the latitude of the latter being approximately determined by the observation that "the sun had both eykt-position and breakfast-position on the shortest day of winter."* The saga then makes Leif's brother Thorvald undertake a separate expedition and explore the country to the west and northeast from the place in Wineland where Leif had had his winter quarters, next gives a curtailed and suspicious account of Thorfin Karlsefni's expedition—to be considered later—and finally makes Erik's natural daughter Freydis go there, accompanied by two brothers, Helgi and Finbogi. On this version Prof. Storm passes a very severe verdict. He points out that no mention whatever has been found elsewhere of Bjarni, whereas it is stated in at least half-a-dozen places that Leif Erikson discovered Wineland on a return trip from Norway. The saga places glaciers in Helluland,

* Sol hafði thar eyktarstað ok dagmálastað um skamdegi.

makes the grapes of Wineland ripen in winter, and employs a German with the strange name of Tyrker to discover them. Concerning the geography of Wineland the Professor says:

"It, on the whole, gives one the impression of a coast on the north, extending far to the east and west, and with several firths running in toward the south. One has to indulge in such an arbitrary construction of the sagas as did Prof. Rafn in order to make this description fit the coasts of North America. Weighing all that has been said, it will, I certainly think, be safest to treat the account of the Flatœ-book with the utmost circumspection. Whatever has its only origin there must be rejected, and whatever is found at variance with early traditions regarded as wanting historical foundation. The voyage of Bjarni ought, I think, to be dropped entirely to leave room for that of Leif Erikson."

A far more consistent and probable story is the one given in the Hauks-book, a manuscript of the very beginning of the 14th century—at any rate, not later than 1334—written by the learned Hauk Erlendson, a descendant of the chief explorer, Thorfin Karlsefni. According to this version, Wineland was discovered by the above-mentioned Leif Erikson. He had been on a visit to Norway, had met the famous Olaf Trygvason (who succeeded in converting him to Christianity), and in the summer or fall of the year 1000 was returning to his home in Greenland. He was, however, driven out of his course and came upon an unknown country. There were self-sown wheatfields and vines growing there, and also some trees called "mauser," of which he took some specimens with him. On his arrival in Greenland he reported his accident, and naturally awakened a lively interest in the new regions. Leif set about converting his relatives and neighbors to Christianity; but his brother Thorstein made an unsuccessful attempt to reach the strange country. A few years later one Thorfin Thordarson, called Karlsefni, an Icelander, who had recently arrived in Greenland and married Thorstein's widow, Gudrid, determined to make an effort to explore the unknown lands. Accompanied by Thorvald, another of the sons of Erik the Red, one Bjarni Grimolfson, and Thorhall, called the Huntsman, who was married to Erik's natural daughter Freydis, who went with her husband, he sailed with four vessels and one hundred and fifty followers to the western settlement and Bear Island, and thence bore away to the southward for two "doegr."* They saw land before them,† "and found there large flat stones

* The "doegr" represents a period of twelve hours. A good "doegra sail" seems, according to the best authorities, to have covered something like one hundred and eight miles.

† The quotations are from Mr. Reeves' book, but I have frequently compared his translation with the reproduction of the original manuscripts.

(hellur), many of them twelve ells wide. There were many Arctic foxes there. They gave a name to the country and called it Helluland. Then they sailed with west-northwesterly (or, as one version has it, northerly) winds for two 'doegr' and found a wooded country and many wild beasts. An island lay off the land to the south-east, and there they found a bear, and later called it Bear Island, but the mainland Markland (Forestland). When two more 'doegr' had elapsed they again discovered land and approached it; there was a cape there. The land lay upon the starboard; there were long strands and sandy banks there. They rowed to the land and found upon the cape the keel of a ship, and called it Kjalarnes (Keelness); they also called the strands Furdustrandir (Wonderstrands), because they were so long to sail by. Then the country became indented with bays, and they steered their ships into a bay."

The saga then relates how they lay by there, while two swift Gaels—Haki and Hekja—of their party were dispatched to the south to investigate the nature of the country. They staid away for three days, and returned with self-sown wheat and a bunch of grapes. "They went to their ships and proceeded on their voyage. They sailed into a bay. There was an island out at the mouth of the bay about which there were strong currents, wherefore they called it Straumey (Stream Isle). There were so many birds there that it was scarcely possible to step between the eggs. They sailed through the bay, and called it Straumfjord (Streamfirth), carried their cargoes ashore from the ships, and established themselves there. They had brought with them all kinds of live stock. It was a fine country there; there were mountains thereabouts."

After having related how they ran short of food in the rather severe winter there and captured a whale, the saga tells how Thorhall, dissatisfied with the outlook on the eastern coast, decided to retrace his course and round Kjalarnes in search of Wineland (not to "explore" it, as wrongly translated by many). He reached the cape, but was there met by westerly gales, and finally driven ashore in Ireland, where he lost his life, "according to that which traders have related." Karlsefni, however, cruised southward with Snorri and Bjarni and their people. "They sailed for a long time, and until they came at last to a river which flowed down from the land into a lake and so into the sea. There were great bars at the mouth of the river, so that it could only be entered at high flood-tide. Karlsefni and his men sailed into the mouth of the river and called it there Hop (a small land-locked bay). They found self-sown wheatfields on the land; wherever there were hol-

lows and wherever there was hilly ground there were vines. Every brook was full of fish. They dug pits on the shore where the tide rose highest, and when the tide fell there were halibut in the pits. There were great numbers of wild animals in the woods. They remained there half a month and enjoyed themselves and kept no watch. They had their live stock with them."

Then one morning a great number of men in skin canoes came paddling toward them and went ashore, staring curiously at the strangers. "They were swarthy men and ill-looking, and the hair of their heads was ugly; they had large eyes and broad cheeks." After a little while they rowed away to the southward around the cape. Karlsefni and his men now built huts above the lake and prepared to stay there that winter. "No snow came there and all of their live stock lived by grazing." In the spring the natives again appeared and began to trade with the foreigners, but finally, distrusting their intentions, took to the warpath, killing two of their number. Although Karlsefni succeeded in beating them back with heavy loss, he now determined to leave this dangerous neighborhood and return to Streamfirth, where the party arrived after a couple of unimportant incidents. The narrator here cautiously remarks that some say that Bjarni and Freydis had remained here (all the time) with a hundred men, while only Karlsefni and Snorri had proceeded to the southward with forty men, tarrying at Hop barely two months and returning again the same summer.

"Karlsefni then set out with one ship in search of Thorhall the Huntsman, but the greater part of the company remained behind. They sailed to the northward around Keelness, and then* bore to the westward, having land to the larboard. The country there was a wooded wilderness as far as they could see, with scarcely an open space, and when they had journeyed a considerable distance a river flowed down from the east toward the west. They sailed into the mouth of the river and lay to by the southern bank." After having told how one morning they discovered what seemed to be a uniped, and that Thorvald, another son of Erik the Red, was shot by him, the saga goes on to tell how they sailed away back toward *the north* [the direction is plainly stated], and believed they had got sight of the unipeds. They concluded that the mountains of Hop and those which they had now found were the same, "and this appeared to be so, because they were about an equal

* "Ok berr thá fyrir vestan fram" can also be translated; "and then proceeded [southward] on the western coast," this being clearly the opinion of the author, as shown later.

distance removed from Streamfirth both ways." They sailed back and passed the third winter at Streamfirth. In the spring, however, they decided to return to Greenland. "When they sailed across from Wineland they had a southerly wind, and so came upon Markland, where they found five skrellings—one man, two women and two children. They captured the boys, but the others escaped and 'sank into the earth.'" These boys they took with them arrived safely in Greenland (there is no mention here of Helluland), and remained during the winter with Erik the Red.

The above is, in the words of Prof. Fiske, "a sober, straightforward and eminently probable story." He points out how it would hardly occur to European fancy to invent such a thing as self-sown wheat. He is, however, undoubtedly wrong in thinking it was Indian corn, because a plant so strikingly unlike anything with which these Icelanders were familiar would surely have been described by them in other terms.* He calls attention to the fact that savages were practically unknown to Europeans before the 15th century, that they knew nothing whatever about peoples who would show surprise at the sight of an iron tool, or terror at the voice of a bull, or who would eagerly trade off valuable property for worthless trinkets—incidents which, for want of space, could not be quoted in the preceding summary. He thinks that the description of the skrellings (inferior people), with their "swarthy hue, ferocious aspect, ugly hair, big eyes and broad cheeks," will do very well for Indians, the "big eyes" probably referring to the eye-sockets, as suggested by Prof. Storm. The expression skin-boats, of course, rather points to the kayaks of the Eskimo than to the Indian canoe. This inaccuracy can, however, be accounted for on the ground that the explorers failed to examine the material of the boats, and simply inferred that, as a matter of course, they must be made of skin, since they were not wooden keel-boats. They may, furthermore, have had an opportunity of examining a boat in Markland, where the inhabitants met with, living in caves, probably were Eskimos. In the "flat stone," Prof. Fiske, with good reason, recognizes the familiar tomahawk, and in the big ball, raised upon the end of a pole, the "demon's head"—according to Mr. Schoolcraft, commonly used among the Algonquins in exactly

* The first to point out that the self-sown wheat of the sagas in all probability was wild rice (*Zizania aquatica*) was, I believe, Prof. Schubeler, of the University of Christiania. His theory has been accepted by Prof. Storm and Mr. Reeves. In Vol. 9 of the *American Anthropologist*, Mr. G. C. Stickney has an interesting article on the Indian use of wild rice, the "*folles avoines*" of early French explorers.

the manner described in the saga. He concludes by saying: "Throughout the account it seems to me perfectly clear that we are dealing with Indians."

Before attempting to reach some opinion with regard to the locality of Wineland, it will now be necessary to devote a little additional attention to the relative merits of the two sagas. Personally I believe, with Prof. Storm, that the older Hauks-book, a manuscript written by a descendant of Karlsefni, Hauk Erlendson, tells by far the best-authenticated and consistent story. It is a narrative that was preserved, we may be sure, with great faithfulness and care in the family of Thorfin, the true explorer of the country, among whose descendants were counted three bishops and many other prominent men. It was inherited from father to son for some three generations and probably reduced to writing in the first part of the 12th century, getting its present shape some 150 years later at the hands of the learned Hauk. Being a family history, it is, of course, possible that these descendants, including the last editor, consciously or unconsciously dragged into the story of Thorfin's expedition incidents that did not belong there, and more especially laid hold of the expeditions of Thorvald and Freydis in order to make their ancestor the first and only explorer of the country. The saga, however, does not show any tendency to magnify the personal qualities of Thorfin; he nowhere plays the role of a mythical hero or plumed knight, but the story is in the main plain and probable.

Turning to the version of the Flatoe-book, it presents, as pointed out by Prof. Storm and Mr. Reeves, a great number of weak points. It is evidently founded on narratives preserved in the family of Erik the Red—a somewhat problematical character—and the bragging tone and many fanciful incidents related stand in a marked contrast to the sober tale of Hauk. The final compiler or some predecessor did not, it seems, like the inconspicuous role played by Leif and his family in the exploration of the country, or perhaps had somehow really got the mistaken idea that Leif went to Wineland from Greenland. He, therefore, borrowed incidents and descriptions from the story of Thorfin, constructed Tyrker in analogy with Haki and Hekja, and made Leif erect his booths near a lake from which a river went out into the sea. It then became necessary to make somebody else discover the country explored by Leif. The saga of Thorfin mentioned one Bjarni Grimolfson; and another man, Herjulf, probably was among Erik's early followers. This may have given the clue to the story of Bjarni Herjulfson, mentioned absolutely nowhere else. Thinking that Leif's brother, Thorhall,

played too small a part in the story, by only accompanying Thorfin, he next made him undertake a separate expedition and supply the keel for Kjalarnes. It then became necessary to reduce Thorfin's followers from 150 to 60 and to curtail his story in various ways. Finally, an incident related of the stalwart Freydis and the short mention of some quarrels caused by the women during the last winter in Straumfjord sets somebody's imagination working till we get a gruesome tale of her separate expedition to Wineland in company with the brothers Helgi and Finbogi. This may seem to be a hazardous conjecture, but it is substantially the view adopted by Prof. Storm and Mr. Reeves, and the only way out of it is to regard the saga of Thorfin as the result of a similar process.

But even the saga of Thorfin cannot evidently be treated as a modern description of travel. No extensive report of the expedition could have been committed to writing before the beginning of the 12th century.*

Ari Frodi, the Father of Icelandic historiography, lived then, and in his abridged *Islendinga-book* makes a short but significant reference to Wineland and the Skrellings, claiming the authority of his uncle, Thorkel Gellison, who in his turn said he had it from a follower of Erik the Red. A larger "*Book of the Icelanders*," by Ari, is known to have existed, and may have given a somewhat extended account of the discovery; but even this is conjecture.

Bearing this clearly in mind, we are bound to admit that certain details were in the nature of things more liable to be corrupted than others during those more than a hundred years of oral tradition; though the memory of those early Norse saga-narrators surely was wonderful. Among such details, naturally, are the number of "doegr" consumed in sailing between the different regions visited. This number is in *Hauks-book* uniformly placed at two, which is in itself suspicious. Mr. Reeves points out the similarity between p(-thvau, two) vau and siau (seven), and suggests that the latter had been given in an earlier manuscript in the first of the places where two occurs. Prof. Storm calls attention to the fact that the saga-narrator evidently placed Kjalarnes in the latitude of Ireland, where we find it on the map of Stephanius (1570). And as it took six "doegr" to sail from Iceland to Ireland, he probably wrongly concluded that the voyage from Bjarney to Kjalarnes was accomplished in the same length of time. It is also significant in this connection that the *Flatoe-book* gives two, three and four "doegr" for the different dis-

* There are very insufficient grounds indeed for the statement of Fiske that it may have been committed to writing already in the middle of the 11th century.

tances traversed by Bjarni Herjulfson. Somewhat less liable to be misrepresented would be the shape of the country and the approximate direction of the winds used in reaching it, while the nature of the climate, the products of the country, and the descriptions of the peoples met with would naturally cling more tenaciously to the memory, although unusual traits were apt to be somewhat exaggerated. The self-sown grain and the vine, mentioned by Adam of Bremen, the vine being furthermore incorporated in the name of the New Country, as referred to by Ari Frodi, must be the main pivot on which our research turns, and would alone seem sufficient to refute any theory placing Wineland somewhere on the Labrador coast or in Newfoundland, not to speak of the impossible theory of Mr. J. P. McLean and others, who even suggest the Northwestern regions of Greenland.

Another observation that would easily cling to the memory is the one referring to the length of day in Wineland, and although not recorded in the earliest manuscript, it certainly makes a genuine impression. This is not the place to enter into an elaborate discussion of the true significance of the term "eyktarstadr." I can only say that I subscribe entirely to Mr. Reeves' opinion that the question has been finally solved by Prof. Storm. I am familiar with the use of the word "eykt" (mod. Ökt.) in three widely-separated regions of Norway. It signifies everywhere at the present date the interval of time between the meals (an addition, from *auka*, to add), and in some places, as also evidently in Iceland in those early days, developed the secondary meaning of the end of the particular eykt, terminating in most places at four o'clock, in some localities as early as 3 or 3.30, but very rarely as late as 4.30. The second part of the compound, however, points to a kind of sundial and octant, well known among the ancient Norwegians, and to the position of the sun in the horizon. "Eykt" in this sense is clearly defined in a paragraph in the ancient law-code "*Gårgás*," and the expression used in the account of Leif would place the latitude recorded not farther north than 49°-50'. For it merely stated that the sun "had" or reached this point of the octant, whereby it is not denied that it may have passed somewhat farther. Prof. Horsford's explanation of this sentence is on a par with the rest of his exceedingly unscientific treatment of the subject.

The description of Wineland as given in the Flatoe-book version did not give us any clue to its location. Let us now try with the one in Hauks-book. A prominent ness (Keelness) jutting out towards the north; a long sandy beach, a firth, one of the many, with an

island outside of it and marked tides running in and out (Straumfjord); a considerable distance farther south a river flowing out of a lake in a rather mountainous country (Hop); and retracing our steps to the southwest of Keelness, about as far from Straumfjord as was Hop on the eastern side, a river flowing from the east toward the west from mountains which were judged to be identical with those in Hop on that very account. Where on the American coast can anything like it be found? It is only too plain that the region around Boston does not fit the description at all. In order to make it at all probable that the Boston region was meant Prof. Horsford had to chop up the saga of Thorfin* in a most uncalled-for and pitiless manner; and the worst of the matter is that he could not even then make his case good. While it is evident from the context of the saga that Thorfin, on his return from Hop, when searching for Thorhal, sailed to the southwest after having rounded Kjalarnes, proceeding till he came to a river that flowed from the east toward the west, at the mouth of which he lay by, Prof. Horsford succeeds in making himself believe that this applies wonderfully well to the Charles River, which flows in that direction for a little distance between Cambridge cemetery and Warren bridge (p. 79). This is assuredly giving us stones for bread. The same wonderful brand of logic makes Thorvald (p. 68) explore the same river, when it is stated in the saga that "they proceeded along the western coast" from Leif's booths. It is only eclipsed by the ease with which he makes him return to Gurnet from Cape Cod (his Keelness), when the saga expressly states that "they sailed away thence to the eastward."

The case stands somewhat better with those that follow the suggestion of Prof. Rafn, and place Wineland, and more especially Hop, somewhere in Rhode Island. Cape Cod being the only place in New England that to some extent answers the requirements of Kjalarnes, Hop must, as a matter of course, lie farther to the south; and as far as this goes any river on the New England coast flowing out from a lake near by would help us out. If we only had to consider the location, Monomy (Horsford) would do fairly well for Straumey, and for several reasons better than one of the islands outside of Buzzard's Bay (Rafn and others). There is, however, not the slightest indication that the explorers sailed straight west from Straumey, the saga on the contrary using the terms "southward" and on returning "northward." And how explain the fact that

* In "The Landfall of Leif Erikson." It is difficult to believe that this vandalism can have been committed in good faith.

Thorfin, after rounding Keelness, proceeded westward and southward till he came to a river that flowed from the east towards the west? There is no such river on the Cape Cod peninsula. Again, what of the mountains which they found there and judged to be identical with those in Hop, because they had now proceeded about as far on the western side of an island or peninsula as they previously had on the eastern?

Mr. L. G. Power, in Vol. 8 of the *New England Magazine*, sticking tenaciously to the small number of "doegr" consumed in sailing from Bjarney, which he wrongly identifies with Disco, to the Kjalarnes of Wineland, tries to show that the latter point may be identical with Cape Chudley, the George River emptying into the Ungava Bay being the river mentioned, flowing from the east towards the west. This would look quite plausible as far as the shape of the coast is concerned, although the correct interpretation of the language of the saga, as given in the best manuscript, requires the same mountains for both regions east and west and not merely widely different parts of the same chain. And what of the vine, the self-sown grain, and the mild winters, not to speak of the statement regarding the more southern latitude? The whole theory breaks down at the slightest touch of criticism. It can easily be proved that this Bjarney could not have been Disco, any more than one of the islands on the Cumberland coast, suggested by Mr. J. T. Smith.

In the *Proceedings*, Royal Society of Canada, 1898, Bishop M. F. Howley advocates a new theory, placing Helluland near Point Riche, Newfoundland, where are found some remarkable flat stones, Markland in one of the Magdalen islands, and Wineland around Miramichi Bay. This is again a case of sacrificing the whole for the part. It is completely at variance with the text of the sagas to look for Helluland at the western coast of an island. Markland is, according to the best version, situated to the southeast. And, finally, the description of Kjalarnes, Wonderstrands, Straumey, and the distant Hop far to the south is entirely misleading if we select the coast of New Brunswick.

But there is such a peninsula as the one described in the saga on the eastern coast of North America. Supposing that Thorfin and his men sailed from an island near Fiskerfjord, in the Western Settlement, as thinks Prof. Storm, they would then most probably first strike some part of Labrador. Finding it extremely uninviting, they again made for the open sea, with a west-northwesterly wind, and next struck either the northeastern coast of Labrador,

opposite Newfoundland—which latter, or more probably Belle Isle, then would be the island mentioned—or some part of Newfoundland farther east. They then proceeded along the coast of Labrador, and finally set straight south, or along the coast of Newfoundland, rounding Cape Race and steering west-southwest, keeping the southern shore in sight for a long time.* In either case they could very easily strike Capes North, Egmont, or Breton. Prof. Storm suggests Cape Breton; but if we stick to the description of the sagas, I venture to think that Cape North or Cape Egmont meets the requirements of the case better, although less easily stumbled over from Newfoundland. If we select Cape North, Wonderstrands would be the long, comparatively unindented, partly sandy coast-line between that cape and St. Ann's Bay. The Firth, into which they stood, need not have been the very first met with. It might have been Mira Bay, outside of which is Scatari Island, that to all appearances could do very well for Straumey. Not finding the climate or natural conditions of the country up to their expectations, it is now conceivable that Thorhal wished to sail northward again and look for Wineland, on the western shore, of which they had evidently caught a glimpse in approaching Capes North and Egmont.

Karlsefni, however, proceeded southward for a long time, finally lying by at the mouth of a river that flowed out of a lake and could not be entered with their craft, drawing some seven feet of water, except at flood-tide. There are many small rivers in Nova Scotia between the Gut of Canso, which the explorers naturally regarded as a firth, and the southern extremity of the peninsula, that will meet the requirements; but if I am correct in placing Streamfirth as far north as Mira Bay, Hop (the true Wineland) could not very well have been farther south than Halifax.

Retracing his course, Karlsefni and his men then rounded Cape North in search of Thorhall, proceeding along the western shore for a considerable distance, finally stopping at one of the rivers flowing there from the east towards the west, coming from mountains which they judged to be identical with those seen in Hop. If they were approximately correct in this surmise, they must have passed the St. George's Bay, and stopped at one of the small rivers flowing out in the Northumberland Strait, east of Merigomish Harbour, the divide of Guysborough and Halifax being the mountains mentioned. Directly opposite Merigomish Harbour is St. Mary's Bay; but being much nearer to Mira Bay (Streamfirth), we are no

* The exact direction of the wind is not mentioned in this case.

doubt justified in placing Hop farther south. On leaving the country for good they again struck Labrador or Newfoundland, and then seem to have set sail directly for the Eastern Settlement.

Turning now to the other features of Nova Scotia, its latitude is sufficiently different from that of Greenland to arrest the attention of the explorers. There is little difficulty about the wild rice and vine, especially the latter, which was found there in abundance some five hundred years later by Jacques Cartier and others, and still is here and there met with, if not in a sufficient quantity, to justify the statements of the Hauks-book. It is true that the winter in Hop is described as snowless. But taken literally, this would point to a more southern latitude than anybody has yet ventured to claim for Wineland, and we may be well justified in regarding this as a slight exaggeration, reasonably accounted for by their comparing the climate with that of Greenland and Iceland.

The only weak point in the theory of Prof. Storm, and less so in the one here advocated by myself, is, in my opinion, the rather unfrequent occurrence of sandy shores between Cape North and the Gut of Canso. As a matter of fact, however, there is in the Ingonish Bay, which is wide and open, a sandy beach of considerable length—at least one mile. For this I have the very best authority—viz., a letter from the Director of the Geological Survey of Canada—and this would, according to my view, be the identical place where the explorers lay by while waiting for the return of the Scotch messengers—an incident that has given the advocates of the barren Cape Cod peninsula any amount of trouble. It is, therefore, extremely probable that the explorers expressly mentioned this sandy beach when relating their story in Greenland and Iceland, and the first historian that committed the account to writing was not far off the mark when he wrote that “there were long shores and stretches of sandy beach there.”

We must, furthermore, remember that the name given to this shore is our most reliable clue to its whereabouts, and that “Furdustrandir” has nothing whatever to do with sand. It is true that “furtha” in Icelandic meant “a wonder,” but as a qualifying term “furthu” generally must be rendered by “wonderfully big or extensive,” and the most correct translation of the name in question is the “wonderfully extensive strands.” That this is the true explanation is also evident from the statement of the saga itself, that these shores received that name “because they were so long to sail by.” And in this respect the 60 miles long, almost entirely

unindented, coast-line from Cape North to St. Mary's Bay can well stand comparison with the much shorter Cape Cod peninsula.

And then we have another piece of evidence that more than counterbalances the sandy shores of Cape Cod. According to De Costa, wild grapes are even to-day growing there among the shrubs, within the very reach of the ocean spray. But if that is the case, why did Thorfin dispatch two messengers to the south to search for an article which must have been there in abundance, right under his eyes? And why did they not even discover any grapes in Straumey, as plainly shown in the saga, if this was identical with Monomy or Martha's Vineyard? This extremely important fact has, singularly enough, been overlooked by everybody; and yet it is worth more than all the bushels of sand that have blinded the eyes of Prof. Horsford and other uncritical defenders of an untenable theory. It is self-evident that Thorhal the Huntsman need not have despaired of finding Wineland on the eastern coast if he had already reached Martha's Vineyard. But we may forgive him if he spoke contemptuously of the lack of wine and the other unpromising features of Scatari Island.

As regards Markland, it seems clear to me that there is no serious objection to placing it in the southern part of Labrador. We must remember in this connection that the explorers came from almost entirely treeless regions, and were apt to be satisfied and even surprised at the first sight of a comparatively insignificant patch of real forest land. And, as a matter of fact, the Labrador coast is by no means everywhere the barren, sterile affair that most people imagine.

In the third edition of the Newfoundland and Labrador *Pilot*, 1897, we read that St. Lewis Inlet, situated only a short distance north of Belle Isle—the very region where, in my opinion, the explorers may have landed the second time—can boast of a fine forest vegetation at the very mouth of the bay. An island inside, even, has the significant name Wood Island, and in the bottom of the inlet the trees are large enough to be used by the Newfoundlanders for their schooners and boats. This region, then, decidedly deserved to be christened Markland. As for the sand, our troublesome friend from Wineland, there is no such thing attributed to Markland in the best manuscript. And, if it should come to a pinch, the explorers need only have followed the coast to Pinware Bay, where, according to the *Pilot*, a fine sandy beach would have greeted their eyes. That something like this was the case seems more than probable, when we remember that nothing in the saga speaks

against it, and that their errand was to explore countries that had already been, to some extent, located.

With regard to Helluland only a few remarks need be added. Every person familiar with Old Norse, as well as modern Norwegian and Icelandic, will know that the name must refer to loose, flat stones, as stated in the Hauks-book, and not to a single flat rock, as wrongly given in the Flatœ-book. And he will only pity Prof. Horsford, who naively reproduces a picture from the east coast of Newfoundland, in which the ruffled rocks depicted have no more resemblance with "hellur" than with the man in the moon. But pity will be mingled with astonishment when he reads that the icebergs floating in the distance are the inland glaciers described in the last-named saga as forming the border of the rock. Surely this kind of historical research needs a strong money-backing to get into print. That some real good-sized "hellur" are to be found somewhere on the vast Labrador coast must, with our present knowledge of the country, seem altogether too probable. Both the Arctic foxes of the only reliable saga and the glaciers of the Flatœ-book decidedly point to a high latitude, not to speak of the fact that the region presumably was entirely treeless.

I must, therefore, maintain that the Nova Scotia theory, on the whole, offers by far the fewest difficulties, and I am unable to see any good reason why we should rather select Cape Cod. The only justification for doing so must certainly be positive archæological evidence. This has, as already mentioned, failed to appear, in spite of the praiseworthy efforts of those who have so earnestly sought it. If I am not mistaken, very few competent archæologists or historians take Prof. Horsford's extremely uncritical philological deductions or his Norse ruins seriously. His etymological speculations on Norumbega, Cape Carenas, and America are more than sufficient to put any person possessing a philological training on his guard. The first mentioned of these names, employed on some of the earliest maps to designate a region south of the St. Lawrence, may with the utmost confidence be said to have as little to do with Norway (mod. Norwegian "Norge" about year 1,000, and later "Noregr.") as with Watertown on the Charles.

I am, however, inclined to think that Mr. Weise was equally wrong in connecting it with the Palisades of the Hudson, explaining the word as a corruption of "Anormée Berge," the "great scarp." Space forbids my taking up this difficult subject here; but in my opinion the earliest form of the word "Noranbega" stands for Normanbega, the latter part of the compound being, as already

suggested by De Costa, the Spanish "vega," meaning a "plain at the mouth of a river." The name seems, as every historian knows, to date from Verrazano, whose expedition started from Normandy, in France. It is first found in a map ascribed to his brother, and there evidently corresponds to the "Normanvilla," given on the five years' older Majollo map, also founded on Verrazano's expedition. My explanation is that the said brother, knowing that no town had been found on the entire coast, changed "villa" to "vega"—a term then current on Spanish maps. The first letters of the word as given by him are in fact illegible, and the "r" in . . . ranbega, commonly read out of it, may be part of an "m." Later this letter was dropped for reasons that need not here be stated, and the other forms, like "Nuremberg" and "Norvega," are easily explained as the product of ignorance and a false interpretation. The theory propounded by Beauvois and others, placing a permanent Norse settlement somewhere in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick, not to speak of New England, is only supported by the slenderest thread of evidence, while the entire Old-Icelandic literature, as a matter of fact, goes directly against it. And even if such a settlement was effectuated, the chances are a hundred to one that it would not have received the name of "Noreg" or "Nordanviga."

Still more fanciful is the derivation of Cape Carenas, which probably did not even designate Cape Cod on an early map. It tries the patience of a philologist sorely to find Carenas on Lok's map through Coaranes or Merriam's traced back to Kjolrnes, Kjalarnes, "probably learned from natives, the offspring of mixed parentage" (p. 12). We have, of course, to do with the Italian or Spanish *Carenas* (Lat. *Carinæ*, French *Carènes*), which means Keels, and evidently refers to the shape of the cape.

This does not refute the theory that the Norsemen struck the identical cape and gave it the name of Kjalarnes for the same reason. But it is certainly enough to prove that no connection was at all necessary between those two events.

Of the derivation of America from Erik the Red through the intermediate forms of Ereka, Emereka, Mr. McLean pointedly says: "This method of treating philology is enough to cause the bones of Sir William Jones to turn in their grave."

The few specimens of the testimony to be derived from names of places as introduced by Prof. Horsford will probably suffice for most readers. After considering them, one does not feel surprised at all in noticing the ease with which he pointed out a Norwegian

fish-pit here and a building site there, not to speak of shoals, islands, capes, and landing-places. But we cannot help feeling that the corroborative evidence of an eye-witness less apt to be carried away by his enthusiasm would be very desirable. I understand that Miss Cornelia Horsford is still working on the same lines, and hope that after all some valuable piece of evidence may be forthcoming.* It is now the only means by which thoughtful students of the sagas can be brought to change their conviction that the Norse explorers most probably never passed the southern extremity of Nova Scotia.

As pointed out by many, the chances are, however, very small that anything will be found, for the simple reason that the Norsemen, as already mentioned, evidently failed to effect a settlement of the country. The sagas do not contain a single statement from which to draw the opposite conclusion, and Prof. Fiske justly lays stress on the fact that no descendants of European domestic animals were ever met with in North America 500 years later. The only structures erected by the explorers, probably, were the dwellings of Thorfin, possibly wooden frame houses (*budir*, booths) resting on corner-stones or wooden blocks, for which it would be vain to look at this late date. The fish-pits dug in the sand would not, under favorable circumstances, last for fifty years, and the palisades would rot down long before the advent of the 19th century. An axe or sword-blade might be found, it is true; but until some such relic is produced we shall be justified in expecting it to turn up in Nova Scotia rather than in New England, however fervently our patriotism may desire the latter alternative.

Space forbids my consideration of the historic importance of this early discovery of the New World and its relation to that of Columbus. Even most Norwegians have of late little patience with the childish exaggerations of Miss Mary Brown, now Mrs. Shipley, and the efforts to belittle the deed of the Genoese explorer; and they look upon the feat of the Norsemen as one of those interesting premature exertions of which history records so many. The Leif Erikson Monument Society of Chicago, which has been striving hard to erect a monument for Leif in 1900, did not succeed in raising the necessary funds in time. The excellent Norwegian sculptor, Mr. Sigvald Asbjornsen, is, however, at present hard at work with

* Her article in the December number, 1899, of the *Popular Science Monthly*, did not, so far as I can see, add anything of interest to the solution of the question. She most uncritically accepts her father's view of the sagas, and the sober statements of Mr. Erlingsson and Dr. Gudmundsson, appended to her article, seem completely to dispose of the alleged Norse ruins discovered.

the elaboration of a splendid model which has received the unanimous approval of an art committee. The statue is to be unveiled next spring. It is sure to be a fitting celebration of the final admittance into the text-books of this country of a much-abused historical fact.

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